

Message Text

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INFO AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO

AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 0775

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI BR

SUBJECT: JOURNALIST REVEALS DETAILS OF SAO PAULO INTERROGATION

REF: (A) BRASILIA 704, (B) BRASILIA 631

SUMMARY: TESTIMONY OF JOURNALIST WHO FIGURED IN HERZOG CASE, CARRIED IN DETAIL IN ONE PAPER, SAYS HE WAS TORTURED AND INTER ALIA PROVIDES DETAILED PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF OFFICIALS HE SAW AT DOI. TESTIMONY'S RELEASE AND EXTRAORDINARILY DETAILED COVERAGE GIVEN IT DOUBTLESS REFLECT OPTIMISM IN WAKE OF REPLACEMENT OF ARMY COMMANDER IN SAO PAULO. ATTENTION TO AFFAIR HAS DIED DOWN, HOWEVER, NEW COMMANDER CANNOT DISREGARD HARDLINERS ENTIRELY, AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS OF EFFORT TO CLEAN UP SAO PAULO SECURITY APPARATUS MUST REMAIN IN DOUBT. END SUMMARY.

1. ONE APPARENT IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF REPLACEMENT OF GENERAL EDNARDO D'AVILA MELLO AS II ARMY COMMANDER WAS RELEASE OF TESTIMONY GIVEN TO HIS LAWYERS AND OTHERS NOVEMBER 7 BY JOURNALIST RUDOLFO KONDER, WHO FIGURED IN HERZOG CASE INVESTIGATION. LAWYERS JANUARY 23 SENT IT TO MILITARY JUSTICE OFFICE WITH REQUEST IT BE MADE PART OF POLICE-MILITARY INQUIRY BEING CARRIED OUT BY II ARMY ON FIEL DEATH. VARIOUS PAPERS CARRIED REPORT OF TESTIMONY JANUARY 24, BUT JORNAL DO BRASIL RAN WHAT APPEARS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE VIRTUALLY VERBATIM ACCOUNT.

2. IN IT, KONDER RELATES THAT WHILE AT DOI HE WAS BEATEN AND SUBMITTED TO ELECTRICAL SHOCKS WHILE HOODED, ALTHOUGH IN SUBSEQUENT DAYS OF INTERROGATION HE WAS NOT TORTURED; THAT HE AND OTHER JOURNALIST INDEED COUNSELED HERZOG TO TELL WHAT HE KNEW BECAUSE INFORMATION PLICE SEEKING HAD ALREADY BEEN PROVIDED BY OTHER PRISONERS; THAT SUBSEQUENT TO FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH HERZOG, HE HEARD FROM ADJOINING ROOM HERZOG'S CRIES, INTERROGATOR'S REQUEST FOR SHOCK-ADMINISTERING APPARATUS, AND SOUNDS SUGGESTING HERZOG GAGGED; THAT HE LATER HAD ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WITH HERZOG, DURING WHICH THEY DISCUSSED APPEARANCE OF MAN PRESENT AT CERTAIN MEETING AT KONDER'S RESIDENCE; AND THAT WHEN TESTIFYING BEFORE INQUIRY INTO HERZOG'S DEATH, HE SAID NOTHING ABOUT HERZOG'S TORTURE AND CRIES, AND REMAINED SILENT WHEN ASKED IF HE HIMSELF HAD BEEN TORTURED. KONDER ALSO RELATED PRECISE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF FOUR MEN HE SAW DURING PROCESS, INCLUDING HERZOG'S "INTERROGATOR". IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM BRAZILIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT PRUDENTE DE MORAIS NETO, KONDER SAID THAT OVERALLS GIVEN HIM AT DOI, "LIKE ALL THE OTHERS", HAD NO BELT (OFFICIAL REPORT SAID HERZOG HANGED HIMSELF WITH OVERALLS BELT).

3. COMMENT: THE RELEASE OF THE TESTIMONY, AND THE EXTRA-ORDINARY DETAILED COVERAGE GIVEN IT BY THE JOURNAL, DOUBTLESS REFLECT THE OPTIMISM FELT BY A GOOD MANY AS A RESULT OF EDUARDO'S REPLACEMENT. COMMENT ON THE REPLACEMENT CONTINUED JANUARY 23-24, AND IT TENDED TO SEETHE DAWNING OF A NEW DAY. SINCE THEN, HOWEVER, THE MEMORIAL MASSES WENT OFF UNVENTFULLY AND RECEIVED SCANT PRESS ATTENTION, AND THE SUBJECT HAD DIED DOWN. HWE CONSIDER THIS A RESULT PARTLY OF PRUDECE (WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BY QUIET OFFICIAL WORD), AND PARTLY OF THE REALIZATION THAT DILERMANDO'S TASK OF CLEANING UP WILL BE MUCH SIMPLER IF HE IS ABLE TO MAINTAIN THE ILLUSION OF ROUTINE TRANSFER IN THE WAKE OF A CHANGE OF COMMAND.

4. HE FACES, IN FACT, A DILEMMA, IN THAT HIS DESIRE TO RESTORE ORDER IN SAO PAULO MILITARY/POLICE CIRCLES, A DESIRE NO DOUBT SHARED BY AT LEAST SIGNIFICANT PORTIONS OF THE MILITARY, MUST BE TEMPERED BY THE NECESSITY OF PRESERVING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE HONOR OF THE REVOLUTION AND OF PRESERVING MILITARY UNITY--
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THAT IS, BY HAVING SOME REGARD FOR THE REACTION OF THE HARD-LINERS.

5. PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF PAST EXPERIENCE, THEN, IT MUST BE DOUBTED THAT EVEN KONDER'S PRECISE (AND NOW PUBLIC) DESCRIPTIONS WILL RESULT IN FORMAL PUNISHMENTS. THE MORE LIKELY PROSPECT IS FOR TRANSERS, IN SOME CASES TO UNPLEASANT POSTS, WITH A VIEW NOT ONLY TO GETTING KNOWN TORTURERS OUT OF THE SENSITIVE

SAO PAULO AREA, BUT ALSO TO BREAKING UP THE HARD-LINING
MILITARY OFFICERS THAT HAVE BEEN THEIR PROTECTION. WHETHER
DELERMANDO CAN SUCCEED WHERE OTHERS HAVE FAILED REMAINS, AT
THIS POINT, TO BE SEEN. END COMMENT.
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